

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project №: W-15-R
Title of Job: 2013 Fall Wild Turkey Harvest

Job: E2



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The fall turkey hunter survey is conducted each year at the end of the fall season. The season closed on 31 January 2014. The objective of the survey is to obtain information on fall turkey hunter harvest and success. Information on age and sex composition of the harvest is also obtained and is reported elsewhere. This year's survey was available to hunters from 1 to 29 April 2014.

Caveats. The fall Wild Turkey Hunter Survey samples only fall turkey hunters who provided valid email addresses at the time they purchased their permit(s). As such, the sample frame may be biased and not strictly generalizable to the population of all fall turkey hunters. For fall 2013, 59.1% of fall turkey permit buyers provided an email address. Removing duplicate and invalid addresses resulted in 52.2% of fall turkey permit buyers with usable email addresses. Although a reminder email was sent out a week after the initial email invitation, no further effort was made to contact non-respondents (e.g., follow-up phone interviews). Therefore, results might be biased towards successful hunters, who may more readily respond to harvest assessment surveys. However, it is likely that such a bias is small, since the survey provided hunters with opportunities to provide feedback (positive and negative) and opinions on their fall hunting experience, providing motivation for non-successful hunters to participate.

Interpretation. Fall turkey permit sales were down 13% compared with 2012, with youth permit sales decreasing by 15.1% and regular, statewide permit sales decreasing by 12.4% compared to 2012. Youth permit sales continued to be a strong component of overall sales, however, constituting 20.4% of overall sales. Overall harvest decreased by 19.3% compared to 2012, but the overall hunter success rate of 63.6% exceeded the 60% goal outlined for fall harvest in the Focus on the Future strategic plan. Overall success rate continued to be depressed by the lower success rate of youth permit buyers (49.7%) compared to regular, statewide permit buyers (65.5%).

Take-Home Message. Fall turkey hunters continue to enjoy high success rates in Nebraska. Youth hunters, although less successful than regular, statewide permit holders, represent a large proportion of total fall turkey hunters. Therefore, the fall season provides a good opportunity for young people to become hunters.

Methods. This year's survey was administered through Survey Monkey with the assistance of staff from the NGPC Communications Division. An initial email invitation to participate in the fall 2013 Turkey Hunter Survey was sent to 5,661 permit buyers with valid email addresses on 1 April 2014, which was 52.2% of permits sold after accounting for duplicate and invalid addresses (59.1% of permits sold were associated with an email address). Of the 5,661 invitations sent, 2 were reported as "spam" by recipients and 486 were bounced back as undeliverable; therefore, 5,169 invitations were received by permit buyers. Of these invitations, 1,978 were opened (38.3% of invitations received) and 912 clicked on the survey link (17.6% of invitations received). A reminder email was sent on 9 April 2014 to all recipients of the first invitation, except for recipients who "unsubscribed" from the mailings ($n = 4$). Of the 5,656 invitations sent the second time, 496 were bounced back, marked as "spam," or the recipient "unsubscribed" from the mailings. Therefore, 5,160 invitations were received by permit buyers, of which 1,719 were opened (33.3%) and 424 accessed the survey (8.2%). The survey was open to participants on the Survey Monkey website from 1 April through 29 April 2014. At the end of the survey period, 1,197 responses were received across both mailings, representing 1,442 fall turkey permits. The raw response rate was 23.1%, and the permit response rate was 27.9%. Each respondent to the survey represented 7.5 fall permit buyers.

Results. Permit sales for the fall 2013 turkey season decreased by 13%, from 12,449 permits in 2012 to 10,836 permits in 2013 (Figure 1). Of the permits sold, 2,208 permits were \$5.00 youth permits (20.4% of permits sold) and 8,628 were regular, statewide permits (79.6% of permits sold). Youth permit sales were down 15.1% compared to 2012, and regular, statewide permits were down 12.4%. Based on harvest reported by survey respondents, total fall harvest for 2013 was 6,748 turkeys (Table 1), with youth harvesting 1,097 turkeys and regular, statewide permit holders harvesting 5,651 turkeys. Overall harvest decreased by 19.3% (16.3% decline for youth, 19.9% decline for regular, statewide permit holders) compared to 2012 (Figure 2). Success rates were also down compared to 2012 (Figure 3). Youth permit holders in 2013 were successful on 49.7% of their permits, whereas regular, statewide permit holders were successful on 65.5% of their permits; overall the success rate for all hunters was 63.6%. Overall success rates were above the 60% goal established in the Focus on the Future strategic plan for the fall turkey season. Table 2 summarizes the 2013 season results.

TABLE 1. Fall turkey season harvest and success, 2006-2013.

Type		Year							
		2006	2007	2008	2009*	2010	2011	2012	2013
Shotgun	Permits	8,373	10,784	9,855	12,738	12,241	11,482	12,449	10,836
	Harvest	4,092	8,857	8,236	10,853	10,356	8,405	8,362	6,748
	% Success	49	82	84	85.2	84.6	73.2	68.4	63.6
Archery	Permits	1,269	1,499	1,480					
	Harvest	334	572	539					
	% Success	26	38	36					

*After 2009, permits were valid for both archery and shotgun seasons with appropriate equipment, so results are reported in aggregate.

FIGURE 1. Fall turkey season permit sales, 1962-2013.

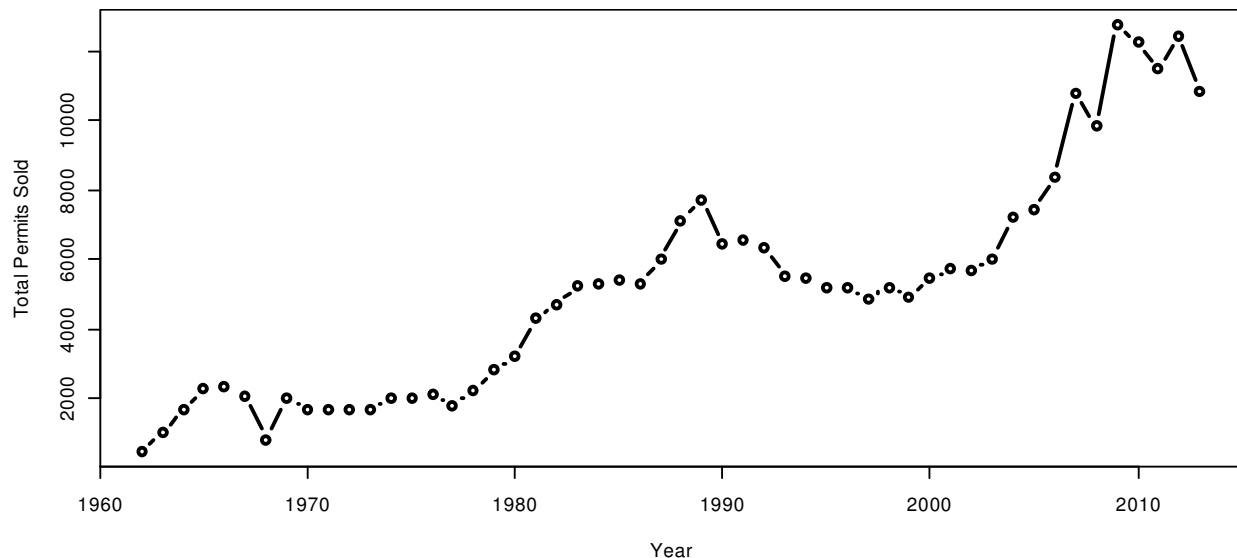
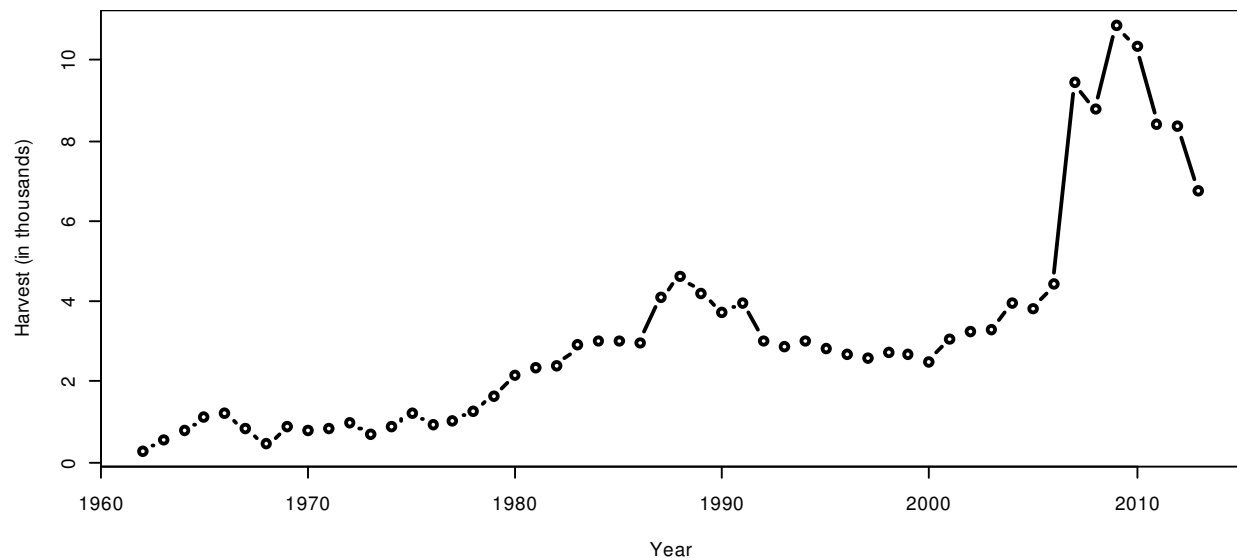


TABLE 2. Summary of fall 2013 turkey hunter survey responses and estimated harvest.

Permit Type	Permits Sold	Survey Permits	Reported Harvest	Success Rate	Estimated Harvest
Youth	2,208	175	87	49.7%	1,097
Regular	8,628	1,267	830	65.5%	5,651
Total	10,836	1,442	917	63.6%	6,748

FIGURE 2. Fall turkey season harvest estimates, 1962-2013. In 2007, bonus tags were added to fall permits, allowing harvest of two turkeys per permit.**FIGURE 3.** Fall turkey hunter success rate, 2001-2013. Horizontal line represents the success rate goal established in the Focus on the Future strategic plan. Note that in 2007, fall permits included a bonus tag allowing the harvest of a second turkey.